



Los Angeles County  
**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH**

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DIRECTOR

April 10, 2018

TO: Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Jonathan E. Sherin, M.D., Ph.D.  
Director

SUBJECT: **REPORT RESPONSE ON SAFETY IN OUR SCHOOLS  
(ITEM 14-B, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 27, 2018)**

On February 27, 2018, your board instructed the Director of Mental Health, in coordination with the Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles County Office of Education, and Sheriff's Department, along with input from entities such as the faith-based community, local non-profit organizations, community providers, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), educational personnel, and other relevant County departments to report back in 30 days with recommendations to enhance the School Threat Assessment Response Team (START) program including possible program expansion; and effective outreach and dissemination of information to school personnel, educators, partners, those who may suspect a youth is at risk for committing an act of campus violence and those directly and indirectly affected by reports of school violence.

**Discussion/Collaboration:**

On March 20, 2018, the Department of Mental Health (DMH) hosted a stakeholder meeting to discuss the Safety in Our Schools motion. Participants included stakeholders from Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD), Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Probation, Office of Emergency Management (OEM), NAMI Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and representatives from Community Colleges. During the meeting, the participants identified needs in the system and developed recommendations to increase positive outcomes. The identified needs include, but are not limited to, improved communication among all agencies including schools,

mental health, law enforcement, DCFS, Probation, Hospitals and other organizations; increased education and training for clinicians, law enforcement personnel, teachers, professors and the community to identify individuals that may pose a threat to themselves or others; limited number of START teams; and limited number of professionals monitoring social media networks.

### **Recommendations:**

As a result of the collaborative discussion and assessment of needs to enhance safety in our schools, the following actions are recommended:

1. Conduct a resource needs assessment in Los Angeles County identifying gaps in service and potential vulnerabilities.
2. Review current models for targeted school violence prevention, including START, in consultation with acknowledged experts and provide recommendations for program development and expansion.
3. Develop referral systems and communications materials to streamline START expansion.
4. Develop strategies for training and educating specific stakeholder groups, including students, community and staff.
5. Develop continuing education programs for mental health providers, educators, and law enforcement agencies designed to meet Continuing Education (CE) and Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements and certification.
6. Develop specialized training program for START clinicians to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the program.
7. Develop a countywide awareness campaign.
8. Reach out to the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee <http://ccjcc.lacounty.gov> to develop a Memorandum of Agreement with all participants and be able to share information without constraints.
9. Work with law enforcement and other county departments to enhance the collaborative to include gun safety protocols.

The implementation of these recommendations will require specialized expertise and knowledge currently not available within DMH. It is recommended to contract with a consulting service to assist DMH to implement the recommendations above. This will include the establishment of an Advisory Committee comprised of nationally and internationally recognized experts tasked with elevating START to a national level and setting nationally recognized standards for Targeted School Violence prevention programs.

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If you need additional information, please contact Miriam A. Brown, Emergency Outreach and Triage Bureau Deputy Director, at (213) 738-3412 or [mbrown@dmh.lacounty.gov](mailto:mbrown@dmh.lacounty.gov).

JES:MAB:jh

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
Chief Executive Office  
Miriam A. Brown, DMH